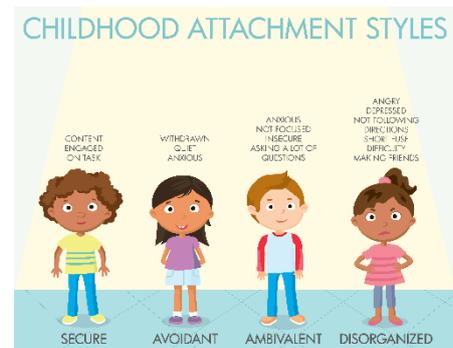




Attachment theory and strategies to support young people



Attachment disorder is a broad term that is used to describe a series of emotional and behavioural problems that can develop in young children who struggle to form expected bonds to primary caregivers, usually their parents. There are many strategies we can use to support children that have these difficulties. It is important that we understand the child's attachment style so that the correct support can be given.



Be a 'super hero' adult.

A young person who has insecure or disorganised attachments is thought to require adults who resemble a baby's early perception of a caregiver – all powerful, all knowing and all caring. Adults should show that they understand the person's needs, and are confident and knowledgeable about how to keep them safe.

Model the right behaviour.

Attachment disturbed children usually notice everything! Adults should strive to model positive behaviour and regulate their own emotions, even when the pupil is intentionally antagonistic!

Adults should use their power carefully – shouting only shows that this is an acceptable way to get what you want.



Intervene early and give them space if they have gone too far.

If emotions are scaled from 1 – 5, 1 is calm and 5 is having passed the 'threshold of madness' into fight, flight or freeze. Different responses are needed at different points on this scale. Aim to use a helpful strategy when a pupil is merely showing signs of a problem (level 2). Once they have gone past this – give them time, use minimum words, give them time out and make the situation safe. You will only be able to address the issue when they have calmed right back to 1 or 2. This can take a long time.

Enable the young person to experience emotional attuning.

Give opportunities to experience attune. *'I can see you are angry. I feel angry too.'* *'You look excited – I am too.'* It



is important to keep your range of emotions small as the young person can find emotions threatening e.g. only use a slightly angry tone of voice.

Use praise and catch child being good.

Give the young person praise for specific things and give praise as much as possible. Continue with the normal tasks after giving praise as they may not know how to accept praise well.



Each day is a new day.



Start each day with high expectations and optimism, regardless of what has gone before! Let the pupils know that today is the day they can do well. You are trying to change their working model that they will face repeated failure

This site provides guidance on how to support the child's behaviour at home

<https://childmind.org/guide/reactive-attachment-disorder/>